

# **Texas Rookery Management**

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TEXAS  
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# **What is a Rookery?**

**Group of birds in trees,  
typically near water.**

**Occupants range from a few  
breeding pairs to thousands.**

**Adults and offspring return  
to same location every year.**

**Nesting season is March  
through October.**



**Cattle Egret**



**Snowy Egret**



**Great Egret**



**Little Blue Heron**



**Yellow-crowned  
Night Heron**



**Black-crowned  
Night Heron**





**Loud, ground covered in bird droppings, feathers, dead birds, prey remnants and many live birds on the ground**





# **Migratory Bird Treaty Act**

- **International convention between USA, Canada, Mexico, Japan and Russia**
- **Established federal protection of nearly all species of birds**
  - **Illegal to “take” migratory birds and their eggs, feathers, or nests**
  - **Take is defined as any attempt at hunting, pursuing, wounding, killing, possessing or transporting any migratory bird, nest, egg, or part thereof**
- **Violations can result in fines and jail time**



# **What can and cannot legally be done to these birds?**

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- **It is prohibited to kill birds or harass them in a way that causes the abandonment or death of eggs or hatchlings**
  - **It is legal to use scare tactics as long as there are no active nests**



**Once the FIRST bird lays an egg,  
ALL harassment and scare tactics  
MUST STOP!**





# **End of Nesting Season Nest Removal**

- **Nests can be destroyed at the end of the nesting season without a permit**
  - **All nesting activities by all birds in the rookery have ceased**
- **Infertile/abandoned/dead eggs or long-dead nestlings may also be destroyed without permit**



# Federal Permits

- **Salvage:** Collect carcasses, restrictions on disposal, must keep log
- **Depredation:** Authorization to lethally remove a limited amount birds





# Prevention of Nuisance Rookery Development

- **Early Detection**
  - Determent should focus on *sentry* birds- those first to arrive as scouts for the rest of the flock
- **Public Awareness**
  - Public education improves early detection





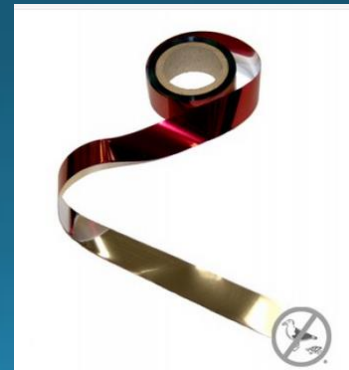
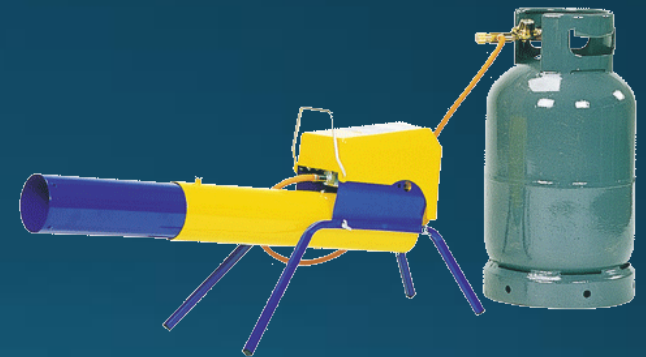
# Scare Tactics

- **Noise Deterrents**

- Predator calls
- Pyrotechnics (screamers, bangers)
- Cracker shells (shot from a 12-gauge shotgun)
- Rope-firecrackers
- Propane cannons

- **Visual Deterrents**

- Mylar tape
- Scare Eye balloons









**Nests can be knocked from trees  
as long as there are no eggs in the  
colony.**





# Habitat Modification



**Thin tree canopies**

**Birds prefer >75% canopy closure**





**Modifications of potential nesting areas usually produces longer lasting prevention.**





**Combination of techniques through June is most effective**



# Summary

- **Early detection imperative**
- **Harassment must stop once the 1<sup>st</sup> egg is laid**
- **Not a one-time fix**
- **Hard work now may result in years of reduced conflict**



# Questions?



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